

# **Population Policy**

**A MANUAL  
FOR POLICYMAKERS  
AND PLANNERS**

**Second Edition**

**by:**  
**Stephen L. Isaacs, J.D.**  
**Gail S. Cairns, M.P.H.**  
**Nancy I. Heckel, M.P.H.**

**second edition by:**

**Stephen L. Isaacs, J.D.**  
**Andrea Irvin, M.P.H.**



## Acknowledgements

15229  
CLIC  
SOPHEA.

The Development Law and Policy Program and the Futures Group gratefully acknowledge the support of the United States Agency for International Development (DPE-0643-C-OO-3063-00) in the research, preparation, and distribution of this policy manual.

The authors wish to thank Deborah Gordis for her outstanding editorial assistance and Aundres Brenyah for her careful and cheerful typing of many drafts of the manuscript. Thanks also are due to the Population Reference Bureau for the production assistance and to the experts who reviewed the policy manual at different stages. They include Barbara Crane, James McCarthy, Allan Rosenfield, Maurice Middleberg, and Scott Radloff.

The views expressed herein are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

©199  
lation  
Grou

All t  
mate  
edge

Popu  
Bure  
1875  
Suite  
Wash

Center for Popu-  
The Futures

that the  
acknowl-

Population  
Health  
University  
venue  
Y 10032

**SOCHARA**  
Community Health  
Library and Information Centre (CLIC)  
Community Health Cell  
85/2, 1st Main, Maruthi Nagar,  
Madiwala, Bengaluru - 560 068.  
Tel : 080 - 25531518  
email : clic@sochara.org / chc@sochara.org  
www.sochara.org

# COMMUNITY HEALTH CELL

*Library and Information Centre*

No. 367, Srinivasa Nilaya, Jakkasandra,  
I Main, I Block, Koramangala, Bangalore - 560 034.

THIS BOOK MUST BE RETURNED BY  
THE DATE LAST STAMPED

--	--	--

by:

Stephen L. Isaacs, J.D.  
Gail S. Cairns, M.P.H.  
Nancy I. Hensel, M.P.H.

second edition by:

Stephen L. Isaacs, J.D.  
Andrea Irvin, M.P.H.

The Development Law and Policy Program, Center for Population and Family Health, Columbia University; and the Futures Group



# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>What is Population Policy?</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Elements Common to Population Policies</b>	<b>6</b>
Rationale	7
Objectives and Goals	9
Demographic Targets	12
Policy and Program Measures	14
Fertility Regulation or Family Planning Services	14
Education and Information	17
Status of Women	18
Responsibilities of Men in Family Life	20
Reaching Out to Young People	20
Improving Health and Nutrition	22
Migration	23
Incentives and Disincentives	25
Research and Evaluation	27
Legal Reform	28
<b>Implementation</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>The Process of Population Policymaking</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Notes</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Sources</b>	<b>37</b>

HP-125  
15229

# Introduction

This manual is written as a guide for policymakers and planners interested in population policy. Although distinctive political, social, economic, cultural, and religious conditions among nations make it difficult to envision a “model” population policy, there are some common problems that policymakers, wherever their location, have tried to address. *Population Policy: A Manual for Policymakers and Planners* examines the substance and common elements of written population policies from 28 countries. It analyzes the way in which policymakers and planners have addressed common problems and quotes illustrative sections from relevant population policies.

In this manner, planners and policymakers from one nation can benefit from the experiences of others. They can use this booklet as a framework or checklist when considering their own national population policies—always bearing in mind that the conditions, needs, and responses of each country will be unique.

The first edition of this manual (1981), in its English, Spanish, Portuguese, or French versions, has been widely used. Since it was written, many changes have occurred: a number of African governments have issued national population policies; more is known about implementing population policies; and the debt crisis has made development more difficult for developing countries. To take account of these changes—in particular the new population policies in several African countries—this second edition of *Population Policy* has been written.

Policymakers and planners should keep four points in mind when contemplating national population policies.

- **Population policies are usually considered in the context of development.** Population policy is sometimes



confused with fertility policy or family planning policy. However, population policy is broader and includes considerations of migration and mortality as well as fertility. In covering these three topics—fertility, mortality, and migration—population policy addresses fundamental aspects of human welfare, such as improving the status of women, widening educational opportunities, and bettering health status. It is fair to say that a development plan that omits population variables is not complete, just as a population policy issued independently of development considerations is not sound.

- **Population and development policies are not in conflict.** The World Population Conference, held in Bucharest in 1974, was characterized by an intense debate about whether population or development was more important. The conference participants finally reached a consensus that the two were not in opposition. They agreed that as development—and this means better education, more children surviving to adulthood, fairer income distribution, and, above all, improved status of women—takes place, people choose to have fewer children; on the other hand, high rates of population growth place great demands on social services, educational systems, and the natural resources upon which development relies. Since 1974, many social science and demographic studies have demonstrated the close association between population growth rates and development.

The consensus reached at Bucharest has dominated thinking on population policy, even though remnants of the old debate continue. The recommendations adopted at the 1984 International Conference on Population, declarations of other development and population conferences, and texts of recently issued population policies support the widely shared judgment that population and development are intertwined.

- **Population policy is no longer such a sensitive issue; population policies are now common throughout the world.** The Indian government issued the world's first population policy in 1952. Through the early 1970s only a few countries, mainly in Asia, followed India's example. Now, most countries in Asia have enacted national population policies and installed demographic units in their development planning agencies. In Africa, where mention of population or family planning was taboo only ten years ago, at least 15



nations have adopted population policies. In Latin America and the Caribbean, ten countries have issued population policies. This does not mean that an explicit population policy is needed or desirable in every circumstance—only that it is often a less explosive issue than feared.

- **Attention must now turn to implementation.** The road to development is littered with the debris of population policies that were written and abandoned and of national population councils that were appointed and quickly forgotten. Putting words to paper is not enough. There must be the political will—and the resources—to follow through.

# What Is Population Policy?

The definitions of “population policy” are numerous and varied. To cite some examples:

- A deliberate effort by a national government to influence the three demographic variables: fertility, mortality, and migration.<sup>1</sup>
- A set of coordinated laws aimed at reaching some demographic goal.<sup>2</sup>
- Direct and indirect measures, formulated by the whole range of social institutions, including government, which, whether intended or not, may influence the size, distribution, or composition of human populations.<sup>3</sup>

In defining “population policy” it is useful to distinguish between “explicit” and “implicit” policies. An “explicit” policy is a statement or document by a national government announcing its intention or plan to affect the country’s population growth and perhaps its distribution and/or composition, as well. Explicit population policies have been issued in a variety of forms, including legislation; documents by governmental ministries and commissions; sections of development plans; policy declarations of a ruling party; statements by the nation’s president or other high-level officials.

In contrast, “implicit” policies are those laws, regulations, and other directives which, although not necessarily issued for the purpose of affecting population growth, distribution, or composition, have the effect of doing so. By aggregating the impact of those policies that influence population growth, distribution, and composition directly and indirectly, one could theoretically arrive at a conclusion about a country’s implicit population policy. In this way, one examines what a country “does,” not merely what it “says.”

It is often very difficult to uncover a country’s implicit policy. First, with few exceptions, policies are not generally



coordinated to reach a common population goal. Second, most social and economic development policies (e.g., education, health, income, housing) are thought to influence fertility indirectly; measurement of all these policies for their effect on population dynamics can be very complex and cumbersome. Third, the net impact of policies often is not known for many years—if it is known at all.

This manual examines only explicit population policies.\* Utilizing excerpts from relevant population policies (see Sources, p. 37), it analyzes and compares options that have been employed by policymakers in different geographical, cultural, social, and religious settings.

\* Some policies are drafts or outdated, which are included to illustrate a particular point.



# Elements Common to Population Policies

Although they may differ from one another with respect to particular provisions, population policies contain a number of related elements. These can be summarized in the following manner:

- **Rationale.** Policies often begin with a justification for, or the reasons behind, the issuance of a population policy. This often takes the form of a demographic analysis and the problems presented by current and projected population growth and distribution.
- **Objectives and Goals.** Many policies follow the rationale by a statement of objectives and goals. These may be general—phrased in terms of overall development or health objectives—or may be written as more narrow, specific goals.
- **Targets.** In some cases, policies set specific demographic targets, such as reaching a certain level of fertility or mortality by a specified year. In other cases, targets are considered culturally unacceptable and potentially coercive.
- **Policy and Program Measures.** Many policies contain or recommend measures which the country plans to take. These commonly include:
  - providing fertility regulation services and information;
  - furnishing population, family life, and/or sex education and information;
  - improving the status of women;
  - defining the roles and responsibilities of men;
  - improving programs and education for young people;
  - improving health and nutritional status;
  - implementing policies to affect internal and/or international migration;
  - providing incentives and disincentives;
  - improving research and evaluation; and
  - carrying out specific legal reforms.



- **Implementation and Institutional Arrangements.**

Many countries try to assure effective implementation by assigning specific responsibility for coordinating or monitoring the population policy or by establishing a specific entity charged with this.

Numerous policy options are available in these areas, as the range of examples below demonstrates.

The first element of almost any population policy is a consideration of the reasons for it. This may take the form of a discussion of the effects of population growth, an examination of demographic trends and projections, or an analysis of the social and economic issues. All of these attempt to answer questions such as: Do we have a population problem? If so, what is it? Why is an explicit policy important?

Population policies frequently open with a demographic analysis and discussion of the problems associated with rapid population growth and uneven distribution. Nearly all the policies surveyed reach the judgment that rapid growth conflicts with the goal of socio-economic development and prevents the benefits of development from reaching all the people.

## Rationale

“We are now embarked on an ambitious programme of planning and development aimed at achieving progressively advanced levels of productivity and wellbeing for people . . . These objectives are threatened by the current rate of population growth, by trends in rural to urban migration that lead to augmented urban concentration, and by open immigration and the resulting problems of deployment of non-Ghanaians in the economy.” (1969)

Ghana

---

“The government of Senegal, aware of the importance of demographic problems and the challenges they pose to the attainment of the nation’s development objectives, and convinced that the population, in both its quantitative and qualitative aspects, must be considered as an integral and fundamental part of development, has decided to issue this population policy.” (1988)

Senegal



## Jamaica

“Population growth has aggravated rather than eased employment and emigration problems. High rates of population growth have also made it more difficult for the Government to provide social services in adequate quality and quantity, notably in education and health care.” (1982)

Lack of employment opportunities, pressure on social services, high dependency ratios, land shortage, inadequate food production, and urban deterioration are frequently mentioned as consequences of rapid population growth. Inappropriate population distribution, rural-urban migration, and problems caused by high population density are major concerns in some nations. The interrelationship between population, environment, and development is recognized explicitly in some policies.

## Togo

“Recognizing that demographic growth and development are intimately related, the national development policy, plans and programs will be based on an integrated approach which takes into consideration the relationship between demographic factors, resources and the environment.” (1988)

## Caribbean Community

“The basis for an effective solution to population problems is, above all, socio-economic development. We do not look upon population change as an isolated phenomenon, nor do we propose to influence it by a narrow approach. It is an integral part of the complex process of social and economic development.” (1984)

The potential impact of population growth on the environment and the consequences of environmental destruction have become an increasingly vital concern of governments.



“Population pressure affects several environmental components, notably forest resources. In effect, because of the low level of income of households and the relatively high cost of energy sources other than wood, the uncontrolled growth of the population will result in an increased demand to consume wood in the years to come. The irrational exploitation of forestry resources will lead to very significant deforestation and thus to a destabilization of the ecosystem.” (1987)

Zaire

The improvement in the quality of life that will come from reduced population growth appears sometimes as a justification for establishing a population policy, more frequently as an objective within such a policy.

“As a microcosm of every society, the family is the first group which feels the effect of uncontrolled reproductive behavior. Thus, the consequences of a large family size, for example, result first in a diminished piece of the pie of each of its members before the strain becomes evident at the community level.” (1987)

Zaire

Nations in all regions of the world, despite their diversity, share certain societal goals such as improvement of the quality of life of their citizens through better health conditions, higher education levels, greater housing availability, and increased employment opportunities.

## Objectives and Goals

Overall or general objectives are often stated in the form of a call for improved social welfare, a better balance between population and resources, or improving the quality of life.

“The objective of the Fourth National Development Plan regarding women in development and population is to mobilize both men and women at a personal and household level in the efforts to bring about a balance between population growth and economic growth of the country.” (1989)

Zambia

## Nigeria

“The goals of the National Policy on Population for Development shall be:

- to improve the standards of living and the quality of life of the people of this nation;
  - to promote their health and welfare, especially through preventing premature death and illness among high risk groups of mothers and children;
  - to achieve lower population growth rates through reduction of birth rates by voluntary fertility regulation methods that are compatible with the attainment of economic and social goals of the nation;
  - to achieve a more even distribution of population between urban and rural areas.” (1988)
- 

## Ecuador

“The ultimate objective of the Population Policy is to assure a coherent and satisfactory balance between the growth, size, structure and territorial distribution of the population and the process of socio-economic development and, in this way, to contribute to improving the lives of the country’s inhabitants.” (1988)

---

## Caribbean Community

“The ultimate goal of this Population Policy is to contribute to an improvement in the quality of life of the population of the region through the achievement of a rational balance between population, in qualitative and quantitative terms, and resources.” (1984)

Many policies proceed from general objectives to specific goals or objectives. These include items such as lower morbidity rates, improved health status, creation of greater employment opportunities, increased participation of women in the development process, more balanced regional development, access to higher quality family planning services, and reductions in the incidence of unsafe and illegal abortions and unwanted pregnancies.



“For the purposes of this Law, the Ministry of the Interior shall dictate and carry out, or when appropriate, promote before competent or corresponding dependencies, measures necessary:

- To adapt the economic and social development programs to necessities which may arise due to the size, structure, dynamics and distribution of the population;
- To carry out family planning programs . . .;
- To lower the death rate;
- To influence the dynamics of the population through systems of education, public health, professional and technical training, and the protection of infants, as well as to obtain participation of the mass of the people . . .;
- To promote the complete integration of women into the economic, educational, social and cultural process;
- To promote the complete integration of fringe groups into the national development;
- To subject the immigration of foreigners to methods which it may deem pertinent, and to procure their best assimilation into national conditions as well as their appropriate distribution within the territory;
- To restrict the emigration of nationals when required by national interests;
- To plan urban centers of population . . .;
- To stimulate establishment of strong national population centers in sparsely populated border areas;
- To promote mobilization of the population within the different areas of the Republic in order to adapt geographic distribution to the possibilities of regional development . . .;
- To promote the creation of towns in order to group together geographically isolated nuclei.” (1974)

## Togo

“The population policy envisages:

- Promoting, as soon as possible, an awareness of the population problem and the repercussions of rapid population growth on development among the Togolese.
- Providing to all the necessary information and education about the benefits of a reasonable family size that will permit each family and the nation to attain self-sufficiency.
- Furnishing young people with instruction on population, sexuality, birth control and family planning before they reach the age of marriage and procreation to help them be responsible parents and to limit their family size to the number of children they are able to raise.
- Facilitating for every couple, and for each individual, free access to all information about contraception and to family planning methods and services at an affordable cost to help them regulate their fertility.
- Providing fertility regulation programs that are responsive to the needs of couples, permitting them to attain reasonable fulfillment.
- Improving the regular collection and analysis of demographic data and the utilization of these data for economic and social development planning.
- Reinforcing integrated rural and urban development in order to improve the conditions of life in the country and halt rural exodus.” (1988)

## Demographic Targets

Some policies complement the establishment of qualitative goals by establishing or calling for the establishment of quantitative targets. Targets have included reaching specific birth rates, population growth rates, completed fertility rates, or family planning acceptors. Latin American policies do not, as a rule, include numerical targets.

## India

“Given the socio-economic, political and administrative situations, it appears to be feasible to attain NRR (net reproductive rate) of one by the year 1996. All resources . . . need to be harnessed towards attaining this goal.” (1978)



“... the average number of children per woman, which declined from almost six in the later 1960s to four by the late 1970s, should further decline to approximately two children per woman by the late 1980s, thereby realizing the goal of replacement level fertility.” (1982)

Governments also have used population policy as a vehicle to set targets for service delivery, family planning, education, infant mortality, life expectancy, urbanization, and so forth.

“Targets for this population policy shall be to:

- reduce the rate of infant mortality from the present high rate of approximately 127 per 1,000 live births to no more than 50 per 1,000 by the year 2000;
- provide high quality, safe, effective and affordable family planning services in all government and private health programs and institutions by the year 1995;
- make family planning services available through one or more means to all of the couples and individuals who wish to use these services by the year 2000;
- provide understandable information concerning the importance, use and availability of such family planning services to at least 90 percent of the reproductive population by the year 2000;
- provide such services and information to all youth by the year 1990 in order to reduce the present high rate of teen-age pregnancy by 50 percent by the year 1992 and by 90 percent by the year 2000;
- increase the rate of continuing practice of family planning to 50 percent among couples of child-bearing age by the year 2000;
- achieve birth spacing practice of a minimum of three years by at least 50 percent of mothers by the year 2000;
- reduce the present average number of births to women of reproductive age from the present high level of 6.7 to a more moderate level of 4 by the year 2000;
- reduce the proportion of women who marry before the age

of 18 years by 50 percent by the year 1995 and 80 percent by the year 2000; and

- make available appropriate family life education, including family planning education and information to all adolescents in urban areas by the year 1995 and throughout the country by the year 2000.” (1987)

## Policy and Program Measures

Having established a framework for population policy—reason for its issuance and general and/or specific goals—policies often proceed to the actions that should be taken to achieve these objectives. The following 10 measures are often utilized by policymakers.

### 1. Fertility Regulation or Family Planning Services

These are a feature of almost every population policy. In many cases, family planning is justified on the basis of its importance to maternal-child health and its status as a human right. The provisions in policies have included statements of philosophical or ethical principles, outlines of the service programs to be initiated or improved, and plans to serve special populations, such as adolescents or rural inhabitants. Other key issues addressed include organization and management, training of personnel, and community participation.

Rwanda

“Family planning will serve the goal of reducing the rate of demographic growth, which constitutes a particular solution to the population problem.” (1982)

Mexico

The Minister of the Interior is charged with taking measures necessary “to carry out family planning programs through the education and public health services available to the public, and to supervise said programs and those carried out by private organizations in order that these might be carried out with absolute respect for fundamental human rights and the preservation of family dignity, so that population growth might be regulated rationally and stabilized.” (1974)



"In recent times, the incidence of unwanted pregnancies, abortions, abandoned babies and child abuse has greatly increased and now constitutes a national social problem. Voluntary fertility regulation and organized family planning have proved to be effective, preventive and low cost measures to control such social problems. Also family planning reduces maternal and infant morbidity and mortality as well as stems rapid population growth in the shortest possible time. Accelerated fertility regulation and family planning programs should be formulated and implemented within the context of our health care and related systems. . . . The government shall ensure the availability and accessibility of family planning services to all couples and individuals seeking such services at affordable prices on a voluntary basis. . . . National family planning programmes shall make available a variety of methods of fertility regulation to ensure free and conscious choice by all couples. Family Planning clinics and commercial distribution outlets shall be established to include the utilization of existing health facilities and community-based delivery systems in order to reach those communities, couples and individuals who are currently not being served by the conventional delivery systems." (1988)

Specifications of family planning methods to be provided or prohibited are sometimes included, as are emphases on providing services to particular geographic or age groups.

"Among the contraceptive methods available in principle, particular attention will be devoted to voluntary surgical contraception, as many facilities in Kenya do not yet provide this service on a routine basis." (1986)

The plan stresses "the importance of extending both public and private sector family planning services to all areas throughout the country via the increase of mobile units and promoting the use of permanent contraceptive methods particularly for people in remote and disadvantaged areas." (1982)

African policies, especially those of countries in West Africa which form the “infertility belt,” often include services for couples who are experiencing difficulty having children.

## Nigeria

“Government shall ensure the availability and accessibility of family planning services to all couples and individuals seeking such services at affordable prices on a voluntary basis. . . . Family planning services shall include services to sterile and sub-fertile couples and individuals who want to have children to achieve self-fulfillment.” (1988)

The importance of organization, management, training, and community participation has been emphasized in some policies.

## Nepal

**“Organizational Framework:** The National Commission on Population, together with the Ministry of Health, will conduct in the next fiscal year an in-depth study of managerial capabilities, service areas and responsibilities of existing governmental implementing agencies.

**Manpower Training and Service Delivery:** Existing capacity for providing family planning services will have to be rapidly upgraded and expanded. To this end, a long-term manpower plan, including training and deployment, will be formulated and implemented.” (1983)

## Bangladesh

The plan stresses the need “to integrate fully the health and family planning organizations at *thana* level and below with a view to making clinical and domiciliary service delivery more effective and to strengthen supervision of the field workers. This will reduce worker-population ratios, optimize utilisation of existing supervisory tiers, make about 1325 rural dispensaries and health subcentres available for family planning services, enable the target population to get much more localised services from both health and family planning programs . . . [and] to enlist total and active support and participation of the people in population activities through voluntary organiza-



tions and organized groups like the village cooperative committees, *swanirvar* committees, labour unions, and youth and women's organizations and to directly involve the village Government, Union, Parishes and other local government institutions in birth planning for every village." (1980)

Many population policies propose public information campaigns and programs in population, health, family life, and sex education. Particular types of programs include those aimed at the general public, children in school, and other specific groups. In countries where family planning is not widely practiced, the importance of education has been stressed.

## 2. Education and Information

"Before making contraceptive methods widely available, there should be developed a campaign or training and information on population and family planning. This will consist of informing people about the principles of family planning, its implications for national development, effective means, and access to services." (1982)

Rwanda

---

"Particular emphasis will be placed on informing and sensitizing the population at the local level of the health, social and demographic advantages of family planning. Informational programs should especially aim to communicate to men and to women messages on the social and economic consequences of an excessive number of births and the moral responsibility of procreation. We will strive in particular to educate all people of reproductive age, especially the young at the collective local level, on the benefits of family planning from the point of view of health, society and demography." (1988)

Togo

Among the information/education/communication measures suggested in population policies are the following:

- using mass media for educating the public on population issues and family planning;
- including family life education, population education, and/

- or sex education in school curricula;
- training teachers at all levels in population dynamics and/or family life education;
- providing population education and information to government workers, health care personnel, and others involved in social services;
- furnishing family life education for out-of-school youth;
- using traditional folk media to spread family planning awareness.

**3. Status of Women** For couples to have fewer children, two things have to occur: first, they must have the desire to limit family size; and second, they must have the means to do so. Family planning services can give couples the means. Higher levels of education, lower infant mortality, and increased income are among the factors that can give them the desire. Perhaps the most significant factor is improvement in the status of women, which is important in its own right above and beyond any influence it has on fertility. This has been given particular attention in population policies.

Ecuador “Any society wishing to make material and spiritual progress must assure that women are fully integrated into its productive, educational, cultural and political activities. Women must be active participants in decision-making at all levels. For this to take place, it is indispensable to change attitudes of the population, to strengthen and enforce the laws, and to have a new social consciousness [of] the principle of equality between the sexes.” (1988)

Nigeria “At present, there are various social and cultural barriers to [women’s] participation in the nation’s development. Early marriage, high bride price, domestic and rural drudgery, discriminatory family treatment and old age insecurity are some of the social injustices that afflict Nigerian womanhood. Low social and economic status, marital instability and insecurity at old age are some of the causes of high fertility. Involving women in the nation’s development is essential to



reducing fertility rates. Special and favorable social and economic programmes are needed for that purpose. . . . Intensive action programmes aimed at improving and protecting the legal rights and status of women shall be pursued. All forms of discrimination against women shall be eliminated as provided for in the International Conventions to which the nation is a signatory.” (1988)

---

“Women, who constitute almost half of the adult population in Liberia, are disadvantaged in many ways. They constitute the majority of the illiterates, the poor, the underemployed and the most economically and socially disadvantaged group. The goals of development include improving standards of living, minimizing poverty, increasing access to education and employment, and reduction in social inequality, and women as a group deserve special attention and consideration of their problems. Their low social and economic status, marital instability and insecurity at old age are some of the causes of high fertility. A special problem is the high rate of adolescent pregnancies which is associated with abortions, early marriage, reduced access to education and early drop-out from the school system. Special and favorable social and economic measures and programs are needed to address these concerns affecting women.” (1987)

Liberia

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (The Women’s Convention), an international treaty ratified by more than 100 nations, provides concrete guidance on improving the status of women. Measures mentioned in the Women’s Convention include increased opportunities for education and literacy; greater opportunities for meaningful employment; greater political, economic and civil rights, including the right of married women to enter into contracts and to inherit property; and equality within the family.

**4.**  
**Responsibilities**  
**of Men in**  
**Family Life**

Until recently, family planning programs have addressed their efforts mainly to women because they are the ones who become pregnant and give birth. The importance of involving men is increasingly being recognized. In order for population policies to attain their goals, all members of the population must be enabled to assume responsibility for their reproductive behavior. As half of a couple, men constitute an important audience for family planning and family life education programs. Some policies separately address men's roles and responsibilities.

Nigeria

"Appropriate information and education programmes shall be designed and implemented to promote awareness by men of their responsibility for adequate caring and for having appropriate family sizes. . . . Appropriate legislation shall be promulgated to discourage and punish men who put underage females in the family way. Appropriate legislation shall be promulgated to ensure that men provide paternal support for any children they father." (1988)

Peru

"Housework is recognized and revalued as a contribution to the economic process of the country which should be performed by men as well as women." (1985)

**5. Reaching**  
**Out to Young**  
**People**

In developing countries, children and young people comprise a large percentage of the population and therefore often receive special mention in population policies. If population growth is to decrease, the youth of today must be educated about family planning and family life so that they can control their own fertility until they choose to take on the responsibility of parenthood. Adolescent parenthood is common and can have many detrimental consequences, both for the individual and for the nation. These include high-school drop-out rates, unemployment, jeopardized health and nutrition for adolescent mothers and their children, delinquency, drug abuse, and increased dependency on society. Since young people are so vital to the success of population programs, many policies specifically address the problems of adolescents.



“Children and young persons under the age of 18 years constitute about 50 percent of the total population of Liberia. They possess a vast amount of energy which is underutilized in our national development efforts. Measures and programs will be instituted to offer opportunities to the youth to contribute positively to our social and economic development and acquire values and skills to enable them to serve this nation.” (1987)

Population policies frequently suggest specific actions and strategies to promote the development of adolescents and to prevent teenage pregnancy. These strategies may include increasing educational and vocational facilities, literacy programs, formal and informal population and family life education, programs to reduce drop-out rates, legislation to improve the rights of children, and laws and policies encouraging late marriage. The Senegalese policy includes the following measures:

- “• Integrating into school curriculum and extracurricular activities of . . . young people a family life education segment to prepare them for responsible behavior in adulthood;
- Supporting youth organizations and putting in place a youth movement. . . ;
- Implementing a program against school drop-out and illiteracy in youth and preparing for their introduction into professional life;
- Expanding, equipping, and decentralizing social, health, socio-educational and socio-cultural infrastructures which encourage the development of young people;
- Seeking a better understanding between parents and their children by establishing a dialogue about the problems of society;
- Sensitizing young people to the risks linked to sexuality and early maternity;
- Implementing awareness programs on dangers such as delinquency, drugs, prostitution and vagrancy;
- Creating employment for which priority will be given to youths in order to insure their full participation in the work of national development.” (1988)

**6.  
Improving  
Health and  
Nutrition**

In addition to the general goal of improving the health of the population (a priority in all countries reviewed), the most frequently mentioned health objectives found in population policies are (1) reducing morbidity and mortality, especially among mothers and children, (2) increasing life expectancy, and (3) improving child nutrition.

Ghana

“Improved health and nutrition are among the major goals of development and will be vigorously pursued. Government assigns the highest priority to providing more health services and improving their quality. The emphasis will be on protecting the safety of drinking water, adopting better methods of sanitation and refuse disposal, giving more inoculations, better maternal and child care, and expanded health education.” (1969)

Senegal

Policy objectives and actions related to health include:

- Reinforcing health and family education services and organizing regular national campaigns;
- Reinforcing and expanding prenatal, postnatal and child consultation services;
- Intensifying and improving the training of the personnel in care of MCH services;
- Organizing periodic in-service trainings for them with appropriate supervision of traditional birth attendants;
- Extending vaccination coverage to all children in the country;
- Improving and extending the nutrition program, and information on maternal milk and breastmilk substitutes, feeding young children and the weaning process;
- Promoting and diffusing oral rehydration therapy nationwide;
- Pursuing the integration of services for birth spacing within MCH centers.” (1988)

Many policies give specific attention to expanding primary health care services. This is considered the most important way to improve health and achieve the World Health Organization goal of “Health For All by the Year 2000.”



"The government is committed to a strategy of providing health care as the best way of improving people's health and promoting development. Primary health care tackles the main health problems of the community by providing promotive, preventive, curative and rehabilitative services. The main emphasis is upon prevention of disease and the promotion of healthy living habits.

The elements essential for attaining an acceptable state of health are adequate food and housing (with housing protected against insects and rodents), safe water, basic sanitation, maternal and child care including family planning, immunization against communicable diseases, education concerning prevailing health problems and methods of preventing and controlling them, and appropriate treatment for common diseases and injuries." (1979)

Because migration is a complex phenomenon, policy responses are varied. While addressed in population policies, specific measures are often left to more detailed legislation or regulations.

Internal migration concerns many nations, as cities become crowded, polluted, crime-ridden, and ringed with slums. Specific policies to achieve a more equitable spatial distribution of population include the creation of new towns and frontier settlements, an increase in rural investment, incentives to industry to encourage decentralization, and improvement in the rural infrastructure to improve living standards in rural areas.

## 7. Migration

"Positive action shall be taken to make living conditions in rural areas attractive and appropriate disincentive measures shall be taken to discourage urban squatters. A comprehensive urbanization policy shall be integrated into the overall development planning process and shall aim, among other things, at reducing the current high rate of migration to large urban centres, developing medium-sized towns and ensuring effective economic interdependence between towns and villages." (1988)

## Peru

“Development policies and programs for the most backward rural and minor urban centers assure population redistribution through investments favoring employment, improvement of services, and conservation and adequate use of resources.” (1985)

---

## Senegal

“Since independence, the consequences of drought have accentuated the rural exodus, accelerated urban growth and increased regional disequilibrium, particularly between the region of Dakar and the rest of the country. Implementation of rural development projects in the south and especially large dams in the north will bring new movements and demographic concentrations. Thus urbanization is accelerating while vast areas are being emptied and are risking lasting decline. To rectify this situation, the following measures have been recommended:

- Spatial planning and land management: the importance of these problems has not escaped the Government which has put into place a scheme of land management and regional plans for integrated development.
- Adoption of incentive measures to encourage small and medium-sized businesses in the interior and new activities in medium-sized cities with the aim of a more equal distribution of the national work force and a decrease of the exodus from rural areas to Dakar.
- Rational planning for the zones of the large dams so that they are used both for the benefit of the local populations and for the nation.
- Improvement of water and sanitation systems in the areas of spontaneous housing in Dakar and in the suburbs, in order to improve the sanitary conditions and the lives of the people who reside there.” (1988)

Provisions to deal with specific problems of international migration are less common in population policies, probably because international flows are variable, responding to changing economic conditions. Migration provisions may deal with such issues as border control, labor migration, and remittances.



In some countries, emigration, particularly of skilled and educated young adults, is considered a serious problem, although if emigration opportunities did not exist, the already high levels of unemployment and underemployment would be exacerbated.

A goal of the policy is “to increase new and additional employment opportunities in sufficient number to correspond to the national growth of the population of labour force age, through the vigorous development of our agriculture, industries, and services. This will permit a reduction of unemployment and underemployment. Success in this task should result in a rapid increase in real incomes of our population and in the reduction of the volume of out-migration from Jamaica, particularly of skilled manpower.” (1982)

Jamaica

Immigration, too, is a concern. One way of addressing it can be seen in the Ghana policy.

“There is no evidence that the rate of immigration into Ghana is slowing down. Uncontrolled immigration of labour, especially of the unskilled type, reduces employment opportunities for citizens. It is intended that immigration will be used primarily as a means of obtaining needed skills and stimulating social and economic development. The Government has introduced measures to insure that would-be immigrants have work permits before entering Ghana so that services that can adequately be performed by Ghanaians are reserved exclusively for Ghanaians.” (1969)

Ghana

The use of incentives and/or disincentives to influence fertility behavior, while common in Asia, is still the subject of some controversy. It has been considered inappropriate by some nations, particularly in Latin America, which have stressed the voluntary nature of fertility regulation programs.

Policy provisions concerning incentives and disincentives range from general calls for further study of their effects to

## 8. Incentives and Disincentive

inclusion of specific measures such as cash payments, family benefits or penalties, and tax breaks.

Ghana's policy outlines several explicit incentives designed to encourage smaller family size among government employees. These include limiting to three the number of paid maternity leaves ever granted to an employee; granting paid maternity leave only after a minimum of one year of service; and limiting to three the number of children for whom child allowances and travel expenses will be paid to government officers.

Thailand's plan covers delivery costs for those undergoing postpartum sterilization and provides scholarships and housing assistance for smaller families. Community incentives in Thailand include agricultural credit and animal husbandry benefits for communities achieving particular targets.

Protection of population-based federal grants and congressional representation can be contemplated to avoid inadvertently penalizing those communities that have successfully limited population growth. The 1976 Population Policy of India (which is no longer in effect) froze representation in the parliament and federal assistance to the states at pre-population-policy levels.

## Nepal

“Work Compensation and Incentive Schemes: A series of measures will be gradually adopted by the government, to encourage those in the organized sector and the population at large, to accept family planning as a way of life. As an initial step, provision will be made for:

- incorporation of additional points (marks) into the promotion system of [the] government, for employees with two living children or less;
- extension of maternity leave for new female employees of [the] government, from the present 30 days to 90 days, grantable only twice during the entire service period;
- a 20 percent increment on earned pension for employees of [the] government . . . with two living children or less, at the time of retirement;
- general incentives applicable to any individual will include: a wage and expense compensation of Rs. 100 to be provided to



an acceptor of[a] permanent method of family planning; a non-negotiable development bond of Rs. 300 (with a ten-year maturity period) to be provided to couples with two living children or less at a time of sterilization; free education, up to the eighth grade, in all teaching institutions under the Ministry of Education and Culture, for children of parents who have undergone sterilization after two living children. . .;

- recognition of individuals or non-governmental institutions, by [the] government, for outstanding contribution in population programmes, through special awards, medals and certificates.” (1983)

The wide variety of provisions for research and evaluation activities found in population policies range from improving existing capabilities, to finding mechanisms for monitoring the population policy itself, to identifying specific types of policy research. The most common provision is a general call to improve the nation’s existing statistical and vital registration capacity.

## **9. Research and Evaluation**

“Demographic information on the nation’s population is poor and inadequate for planning of socio-economic development. Reliable and timely data are essential to systematic and scientific projections. National experts on population should be integrated into national agencies responsible for formulating and implementing population and development policies, programmes and projects. Effort should be intensified to generate more reliable, timely and appropriate data.” (1988)

Nigeria

Many policies also include a general statement about evaluation.

“The objectives of supervision and evaluation will be to assure that the facilities, where family planning services and information and teaching on the subject are dispensed, are available, suitable and accessible. A periodic evaluation of different

Togo

activities will be done to insure that each service is satisfying the objectives of the demographic activities which are assigned to it within the framework of the national population policy. The impact and the evaluation activities of the demographic program will be felt at two levels: the national level, emphasizing the total demographic impact, and the household level, to determine the degree of effectiveness of furnishing these services and the importance of their consumption.” (1988)

A policy is strengthened when it specifies the agency responsible for carrying out research and evaluation. Thus, Mexico’s National Population Council is charged with evaluating the national population policy. The Jamaica policy calls for collaborative arrangements between key public, private, and university institutions. El Salvador’s policy created a Technical Committee with a mandate to conduct demographic evaluations, while giving the private family planning association responsibility for evaluating the results of mass communications activities.

**10. Legal Reform** Because existing laws may purposely or inadvertently affect population growth, legal and regulatory changes may be necessary for the effective implementation of population policies. It is common for policies to call for a review of relevant legislation or to state that laws which are contrary to the policy objectives should be revised.

Areas in which specific reforms are mentioned include the provision of family planning services; the distribution, advertising, import, manufacture, and mailing of contraceptives; the political, civil, economic and social status of women; age-at-marriage; and the use of incentives and disincentives. These can involve changes in civil codes, penal codes, family codes, labor codes, tax codes, codes of medical ethics, and regulations issued by ministries of health and other ministries. Seven francophone African countries have repealed laws, based on the 1920 French Code, that prohibited the distribution and advertising of contraceptives.



“It is indeed difficult to generate a positive attitude towards family planning amongst the population at large, unless appropriate legal provisions are made to encourage the small family norm. The fact that the population problem and its solution is a matter of national priority, has to be reflected in contemporary legal provisions. Accordingly, the following amendments and modifications in prevailing laws have been recommended:

- Amendment and modification in existing laws need to be made, in order to provide a legal basis for sterilization.
- Prevailing laws stipulate the minimum marriageable age for women at 16 years (with the consent of the guardian) and 18 years (without such consent). Provisions need to be made to raise the minimum marriageable age for women to 20 years.
- Abortion in Nepal is not only illegal but punishable by law. Legalization of abortion, under specified conditions, has therefore to be given due consideration.
- In order to raise the social and economic status of women, appropriate amendments in existing inheritance laws are desirable.” (1983)

# Implementation

Merely issuing a policy does not guarantee that it will be carried out. For that reason, many policies specify the institutions responsible for implementation. As the Nigeria policy states, "The implementation of the National Population Policy is a complex, multisectoral activity. All tiers and agencies of government as well as communities and nongovernmental organizations should be actively involved. . ."

Often, this means setting up an interministerial "population council" or a technical demographic unit in the planning ministry.

## Sahel

"The member states are urged to identify the institutional framework for the implementation of national population policies. The framework could include the following elements:

- the political body responsible for the broad outlines of the national population policy;
- the technical body responsible for coordinating the implementation of the national population policy;
- . . . coordination bodies." (1989)

## Togo

"The implementation, follow-up and evaluation of the national population policy necessitates construction of an appropriate permanent structure which will comprise two levels: a national commission of population; [and] a unit for population planning. The National Commission of Population will be the highest agency in the hierarchy for population issues in the structure of this new national policy. It will help the Government in the definition and the implementation of the national



population policy and in promoting the measures and socioeconomic programs which will put the national population policy in place." (1988)

"The National Population Council is created to be in charge of the demographic planning of the nation, in order to include population considerations in programs of economic and social development formulated within government sectors, and to unite their objectives with the needs arising from demographic phenomena. The National Population Council shall be composed of a representative of the Ministry of the Interior and by a representative from the Ministries of Public Education; Health and Public Assistance; Treasury and Public Credit; Foreign Relations, Labor and Social Security; and of the Presidency, as well as the Department of Agrarian Affairs and of Colonization." (1976)

Mexico

The location of a national population council can be a key factor influencing its success. The current tendency is to place the national council in the ministry of planning or interior. Some policies that are particularly oriented towards health and family planning establish their national population in the ministry of health. Given the broad-based nature of population policy, it is preferable, as a general rule, to place the council in the ministry of interior or planning.

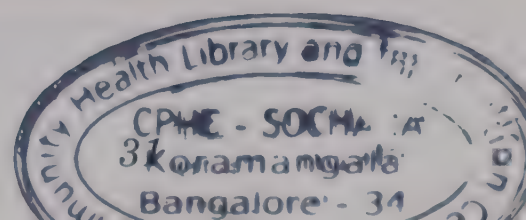
Although implementation is, in general, a government responsibility, a number of policies emphasize the importance of the private sector as well.

"The involvement and active participation of both public and private sectors are essential for the successful implementation of the population program outlines in this policy. Hence, efforts shall be made to harness the resources of both sectors and evolve an appropriate machinery to facilitate close interaction and cooperation." (1988)

Nigeria

HP-125

15229



## Kenya

“Sectoral activities include programmes educating young people regarding population issues, carried out in schools . . . and teacher training institutions. In addition most Government Ministries will provide family life education through informal courses to adult learners, using appropriate inter-personal communication techniques as well as themes and language reflecting the communication partners’ background. The NGO community will participate, catering to specific constituencies based on regional, social and religious affiliations. The private sector will likewise activate its constituency, i.e. employees at the work place, through education and communication activities including folk media. Lastly, the country’s media . . . will be utilized to spread population messages among mass audiences.” (1986)

It should be remembered that ministries have responsibility for planning and implementing programs in their sector and that, in general, national population councils play a coordinating or monitoring role. This can lead to competition in some cases, for example, Jamaica and Peru.

“When initially established, the Population Policy Coordinating Committee (PPCC), under the direction of the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), had the responsibility to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the Policy. However, each of the collaborating sectors continued to develop and carry out programmes as determined by them in relation to the perceived priority needs of the respective sector. The coordination of plans and programmes at the national level was weak.”<sup>4</sup>

“Implementation of the policy [in Peru] was slowed by two obstacles. In the public sector, the National Population Council had difficulty coordinating with the National Planning Institute; in addition, the director of the Council had no authority to issue regulations that would be followed by the Ministry of Health, Education, etc. In the private sector, the Council had no authority to monitor and evaluate the activities of the many organizations that existed.”<sup>5</sup>

Planners and policymakers should be aware of these potential conflicts between institutions. They can sabotage even



the most well-intentioned policy. Planners and policymakers should also understand that creating a coordinating institution is a first step; by itself it will not assure that population policy will be implemented. The experience of successful countries such as Mexico indicates the importance of an intangible factor, political will, and of repeated articulation of national policy by high-level and visible leaders.

# The Process of Population Policymaking

Population policies, like policies in other fields, are the product of a political process and often represent a compromise between competing ideas. However, unlike many fields, population issues can be particularly controversial and frequently have very little immediate political “payoff” for policymakers. Thus, the enactment of population policies will often be difficult.

Policymakers should think through the process of issuing a population policy. Some of the questions which can be asked are:

- How can a constituency best be developed in support of a population policy?
- What are the strongest arguments in favor of a population policy? To whom should they be addressed?
- What form should a population policy take (e.g., a law passed by parliament; a declaration of the prime minister; a ministerial resolution)?
- What methods can be used to educate or to minimize any opposition?
- What is the most advantageous timing?

The Jamaican experience, as described by a participant in the process, outlines some essential ingredients needed before policymaking begins:

- First, a broad-based consensus. The urgency of the problem and a need for the policy should be acknowledged
- Second, local political support. Efforts should be made to accommodate powerful groups such as religious organizations or other nationalist groups.
- Third, highly motivated and influential local leadership, who will commit themselves to the cause.

The process of policymaking as further described at a



Caribbean regional conference applies not only to Jamaica but to all nations:

"The first stage is to assemble and organize the available body of theoretical and empirical information on the country's population trends in the context of social and economic development. Involvement of a broad cross-section of experts, public servants, politicians and others in workshops and task forces should be encouraged. But the work of these bodies should be well prepared, coordinated and directed to clear goals if any success [is] to be achieved.

"A mutually complementary network of institutions that can provide data, conduct research, train experts, and provide services is needed. In order to guarantee a relatively smooth functioning of this network, a strong coordinating body is required. It is advisable that this population policy coordinating unit be attached to the government's planning ministry which is multidisciplinary in nature, operates above all sectors and can establish links with the planning units in sectoral ministries as well as the various levels of local government.

"With regard to the implementation of the policy, widespread involvement of numerous yet appropriate institutions within and outside the government is advisable.

"Finally, wide dissemination of knowledge and news about relevant data, activities, research, and policies through a variety of channels such as the educational system, public and private organizations, and communications media, will prove effective in developing and implementing a national policy."<sup>6</sup>

Despite the difficulties, policymakers who have undertaken the development of a national population policy have found it an important step in the development process that will benefit the nation and its people for years to come.

# Notes

1. Organski, K. and A. Organski, *Population and World Power* (New York: Knopf, 1961).
2. Bourgeois-Pichat, J., "France," in *Population Policy in Developed Countries*, B. Berelson, ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 1974).
3. Driver, E., *World Population Policy: An Annotated Bibliography* (Lexington, 1972).
4. Douglas, E., *Overview and Development of Jamaica's Population Policy and Programme*, speech delivered at the Second Inter-American Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development, Quito, Ecuador, 1990.
5. Sotomarino, C., *La Politica de Poblacion en el Peru*, speech delivered at the Second Inter-American Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development, Quito, Ecuador, 1990.
6. Boland, B., *National Population Policy of Jamaica: Development and Implementation*, a paper presented at CARICOM Regional Awareness Conference, 1984.



# Sources

- Bangladesh. Planning Commission, *The Second Five-Year Plan*, 1980-1985.
- Botswana. Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, *National Development Plan*, 1979-1985.
- Burundi. Comité Central du Parti UPRONA, *La Politique de la Planification Familiale et du Control Démographique*, 1983.
- CARICOM Secretariat, "Population Policy for the Caribbean Community," Draft, June 1984.
- China, "The Importance of Birth Planning in China," speech of Wan Li, Vice Premier of the State Council, 1986.
- Ecuador. *Politica de Población de la República del Ecuador*, 1988.
- El Salvador. *Politica Integral de Población*, 30 Octubre 1974.
- Ghana. *Population Planning for National Progress and Prosperity: Ghana Population Policy*, 1969.
- India. "National Population Policy." Statement by Dr. Karan Singh, Minister of Health and Family Planning. New Delhi, 16 April 1976.
- India. Planning Commission, "Draft Sixth Five-Year Plan," 1978-83, Revised.
- Jamaica. Population Policy Task Force, Ministry of Health, *A Statement of National Population Policy*, 1982.
- Kenya. National Council for Population and Development, *Population Policy Guidelines*, 1986.
- Korea, Republic of. *The Revised Fifth Year Economic and Social Development Plan*, 1984-1986.
- Liberia. *National Policy on Population for Social and Economic Development*, 1987.



- Mexico. "General Population Law of 1974." UNFPA, *Annual Review of Population Law*, 1974.
- Mexico. "Regulation Pursuant to the General Law on Population, 12 November, 1976." UNFPA, *Annual Review of Population Law*, 1976.
- Nepal. *National Population Strategy*, 1983.
- Nigeria. *National Policy on Population for Development, Unity, Progress and Self-Reliance*, 1988.
- Peru. *Population Policy Guidelines*, 1976.
- Peru. *National Population Policy Law*, 1985.
- Rwanda. *III Plan Quinquennal de Développement*, 1982-1986.
- Sahel. *N'Djaména Plan of Action for Population and Development in the Sahel*, 1989.
- Senegal, République du. Ministère du Plan et de la Coopération, *Déclaration de la Politique de Population*, 1988.
- Swaziland. *Third National Development Plan*, 1978/79 - 1982/83.
- Thailand. National Economic and Social Development Board, Office of the Prime Minister, *The Fifth National Economic and Social Development Plan*, 1982-1986.
- Togo. *Projet de Politique Nationale de Population* (Resultats du Conclave de Bethanie), 1988.
- Turkey. *Population Planning Law*, 1983.
- Vietnam. Council of Ministers, *Population and Family Planning Policies*, 1988.
- Western Samoa. *Economic and Development Department, Fourth Five-Year Development Plan*, 1980-1984. Vol. I, January 1980.
- Zaire, République du. Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution, Département de la Planification, Commission Nationale sur la Population, *Politique Nationale de Population*, 1987.
- Zambia. *National Population Policy* (1986) and *Fourth National Development Plan* (1989-1993).







